A SEASONABLE WORD OF ADVICE

Unto all the SAINTS in *ENGLAND.*

Whereby they are exhorted to beware of *Satans ſubtilties*, and hold faſt the words of ſound Doctrine.

By *J. B.* a lover of the Truth.

LONDON,
Printed by *T. C.* and are to be ſold by *George Wilford* in Little-Brittain, neere the Lame-hoſpitall. 1655.

101 (17)

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

To all the Saints in England, *who desire to acquaint themselves with those Scriptures which do discover the secret waies of Satan, by which he doth seek to deceive in these last daies.*

Christian friends,

WHose welfare I heartily desire; do not dispise this friendly Exhortation, which was written with much Care, and Fear. Fear, least I should write any thing which should not be the Truth of God; Feare, least I should omit the writing of any Truth: Feare, least *I* should grieve the Spirit of any Saint; Feare, least I should neglect to acquaint the Saints with the Subtilties of Satan. (The Lord having put it into my heart to confider them.)

In all Ages the Divil hath sought to deceive the Elect. And if in the Apostles daies there were deceitful workers, who transformed themselves into the Apostles of Christ: if *Satan* transformed himselfe, then, into an Angel of light: and if his Ministers did, then, transforme themselves as though they were the Ministers of Righteousnesse: we may be assured, that in these daies, and Ends of the World, he will leave no way, or meanes unattempted, by which he may seduce. 2 Cor 11. 14. 15.

b If they who lived in those last times in which the Apostles were, (even they who were kept by the Power of God through Faith unto salvation) had their Faith tried; do the Saints now think to escape the like Trial? assuredly Friends, our faith will be tried; even that Faith, by which we shal be brought unto that Salvation, which is prepared to be shew'n in the last Times: that we may be found unto Praise, and honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7.

1 Tim. 4. 1. In the laſt daies many will depart from the Faith; for many will, then, give heed to Doctrines of Divils, and Spirits of Errours. And indeed none will ſtand and continue in thoſe Daies, in the Faith; but they who have the *Aneynting*, the holy *Spirit* of God in them. All others will fall under the Deceptions of that antichriſtian Spirit, which then will be found in the world. For they who never were really of God, will then depart from him. If they had been of him, they would have continued with him.

1 John 8. 18, 19, 20.

If theſe be the laſt Daies: If Satan will now endeavour to deceive thoſe who profeſſe the Lord Jeſus: If it be a difficult thing to diſcerne, in theſe Times, the Subtilties of *Satan*: If he will leave no way unattempted: and if his Rage and Malice will increaſe, the nearer the End of his Kingdom will approach: then, the more Reaſon have all thoſe that feare God, to be circumſpect in all things; and to provoke one another, not onely to attain unto the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but to obſerve, with diligence, the cunning practiſes of Satan. For, a good ſouldier wil not only have reſpect unto that kingdom he fighteth for; and to the Commands of his General: but will, with all Circumſpection, prudently watch over every motion of his Enemy.

And that I may move you hereunto, I ſhall deſire all the Saints of God to conſider this Exhortation of the Apoſtle.

1 Pet. 5. 8. *Be ſober, and watch: For your Adverſary the Divil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

In which Scripture there are two parts. 1. A double Exhortation: *Be ſober, and watch.* 2. The Ground or reaſon thereof, which is likewiſe two-fold: the firſt is exeluſive to the Text, and is to be found in the fourth verſe, being drawne from the Saints glorious appearing with their great Shepherd. For thus ſaith the Apoſtle, *When your great Shepherd ſhall appear, you ſhall receive an incorruptible Crown of Glory.* And then in the fifth verſe he exhorteth them to hnmility; in the ſeventh verſe to caſt their Care on the Lord; and in the eight verſe to be *Sober* and.

watch

watch. The ſecond Reaſon which moved the Apoſtle to exhort to *Sobriety*, and *vigilancy*, is included in the verſe: and is, *Becauſe their Adverſary the Divil, as a roaring Lyon, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.* From the Premiſes we may ſafely draw this concluſion, that

The nearer the time is unto the Appearing of the great Shepherd, and the nearer the Kingdom of Satan is to an End: the more the Divil will indeavour to enſnare the Saints, and manifeſt his Rage againſt them.

Firſt, this will appear by what is written in this fifth chapter of the firſt Epiſtle of Saint *Peter*: where the Apoſtle, from the conſideration of the next appearing of Chriſt, and Rage of Satan; doth admoniſh the Elect, both the ſhepherds, and the ſheepe, to Circumſpection, and Diligence.

Secondly, the Truth of this Doctrine will appeare from that which we finde written by Saint *John*, *The Divil is come down unto you, and hath great wrath, knowing that he hath but a ſhort time. Rev.* 12. 12. for, by the Power of Chriſt, (who overcame *Satan*) *Satan* the Accuſer of the Brethren (who are by him tempted unto ſin, and by him accuſed thereof) was caſt downe; v. 10. and his wrath doth increaſe, becauſe he knoweth his time is but ſhort. But ſhort in the account of God; and in compariſon of that eternal weight of Glory, which ſhall be given unto thoſe who overcome his Temptations. And if his Rage will increaſe, as his Time will decreaſe; then the Elect, who live in the laſt Daies, muſt expect to be aſſaulted more fiercely by him, then the Saints in former Ages have been. But

Thirdly, The truth hereof is experienced at this Day. For, although it muſt be confeſſed, that *Satan* doth not at this Time move ſuch heavy Perſecutions againſt the Bodies of the Saints, as he did in former Ages: yet he hath in theſe daies put on more angelical *Formes*, and ſhapes to deceive, then in any former time.

Theſe things being conſidered, I will (by the Lords aſſiſtance) declare,

1. Two *Snares* which *Satan* doth lay in theſe Times to intrap

intrap, deceive and delude the Saints.

2. Many cunning waies by which he doth attempt this Worke.

3. The End that *Satan* aimeth at, the Advantage he getteth, and the Inconveniences the Saints run into, when they are deceived. And

4. The Remedies which the *Lord* hath appointed, both for the prevention of ſome that they fall not; and the Recovery of others that are falne.

The firſt *Snare* (which I ſhall mention) that *Satan* layeth for thoſe that profeſſe Chriſtianity, is

To bring them into a wrong underſtanding of the Scriptures, and ſo in time to wreſt and pervert them. 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. which he doth,

Firſt, by cauſing them to hold to the opinions of their *Forefathers*, although they be never ſo contrary to the *Word* of *God*.

In all Ages men have highly eſteemed the *Traditions* of their *Forefathers*. And whether they were ſuch as concerned divine worſhip, or civil manners, they alwaies had a reverend eſteeme of them; imbracing them for their Antiquity. It being accounted a great Hereſie, among the generalitie of men, to queſtion the Judgement of their Anceſtours concerning any law, or Cuſtome approved of, or exerciſed by them: as if long continued uſe, or allowance of any thing, could make that lawful and good, which in it ſelfe is unlawful, and diſcommendable: or that the Judgement of ancient men, who lived in former Ages, were not to be queſtioned by ſucceeding Generations. This maketh men ſo loath to leave off (nay even to reaſon or conſider the lawfulneſſe of) the traditions of their Elders. And hereupon it is, that moſt men in the world can give no better an account, and Reaſon of their pinciples upon which they ground their ſalvation, and eternal welfare; then this, thus my *Forefathers* did: thus they worſhiped God: and thus they beleeved: and ſo will I. Are we wiſer then our *Forefathers*? did not they underſtand the Scriptures as wel as we? were they not as learned as we are? Here *Satan* taketh Advantage.

tage. And to nouriſh Ignorance, hereby, in them; he doth ſuggeſt many Arguments unto them, to ſtrengthen, and confirme them in this rediculous Errour. Whereas Reaſon will dictate this, that no man ought to allow, or approve of any thing implicitly. Agreeable hereunto is that inconſiderate Cuſtome among men, to pin their opinions upon the Judgements of other men, living in their owne Time; whom they account learned, and judicious. The great Deſigne of *Satan*, in all theſe things, is to hinder men from ſearching into the Scriptures; knowing that they are the onely light to guide us in this dark Age; and Touchſtone, to try the Spirits, in our ſelves, and other men. For, take men off from this, (from the ſearch of the Scriptures) and it is an eaſie thing to impoſe any thing upon them: as eaſie, as to deceive a blinde man in the choice of Colours. *Satan* having thus deluded any, and brought them into this *Snare*; how freely will they receive any colourable Interpretation of Scripture? and how apt will they be to wreſt and pervert the ſame, according as he ſhall tempt them thereunto?

A ſecond way by which *Satan* bringeth men to a miſunderſtanding of the Scriptures, & a perverſion of them; is by perſwading them to conſult with their own *Reaſon*; in finding out the mind of God, concerning ſpirtual things.

This Satan effecteth, by taking Advantage of an Excellency which men ſuppoſe they ſee in natural Reaſon: by which they think they are able to diſcern of ſpiritual Truths. But can the Creature, who hath all his knowledge conveyed unto him by ſence, know thoſe things which the ſences cannot reach unto? How can the Eye diſcerne that which it hath not ſeen? or the Eare that which it hath not heard? or the heart that which never came into it? Can Reaſon tell a man (without divine Manifeſtation) what God hath prepared for thoſe that love, and fear him? theſe things Reaſon cannot informe us of; neither can the ſpirit of a man know them, but they muſt be revealed by the ſame Spirit which was in Jeſus Chriſt. By the *Spirit* which naturally is in us, we are capable of knowing thoſe things which belong to our Generation: but no more. And if a mans

ſpirit

Spirit cannot know the things of other Creatures; much leſſe can it diſcern the things of God, even thoſe Myſteries which were determined by him before the world began. For it is a certain Truth, that the natural Man knoweth not the things of God. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10, 11.

And although the Scriptures are written in no other words, then ſuch, with which we do uſually ſpeake one unto an other; yet it is no eaſie thing to underſtand the minde of the holy Ghoſt therein. Some words are allegorically, others myſtically, others literally to be underſtood: ſome all theſe waies. Some expreſſions are typical: others comparative: and others prophetical: ſome propheſies hold forth things paſt: ſome things preſent: and others things to come: ſome all of theſe. Yet there are ſome, (and too many ſuch there are) when they read a Text of Scripture, will take upon them, by the conſideration of the very words, to declare the meaning and purpoſe of the holy Ghoſt therein. Hereby the world is filled with ſo many ill begotten opinions.

Others ſay, look into that Light which is in you: (meaning the Light of Reaſon) walke by that Light. What need (ſay they) have men to looke into the Scriptures, or to preach the word; while they have a light within them? When as, alas, the light of the natural man; as Reaſon, knowledge, and the like (as to the things of God) is darkneſſe; *Epheſ.* 5.8. untill the Lord (by a ſupernatural worke of Grace) do enlighten them: and then they are ſaid to be Light in the Lord; or as the Apoſtle, in an other place, Ye are the children of the Day, and not of the night. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 5. that is, ye are not now in a natural and unregenerate Condition; but newborne, and enlightened by the Spirit of God. By aſcribing that unto Reaſon, which onely is the worke of the Spirit, they force the Creature to depend upon his owne ſtrength: they put him upon a worke which he is not able to do: they caſt their Eyes onely upon ſelf-ſufficiency, and neglect a dependance upon God by *Faith*; they lay the whole weight of the Duety of a Chriſtian, upon the performance of ſome outward things, which conſiſt chiefly in *Touch not*: *Taſte not*: *Handle not*: in periſhing ſervices:

ces; and in the Doctrines and commandements of men, by which they are deceived; becauſe there is in theſe things a ſhew of wiſdome; in voluntary Religion, and humbleneſſe of minde, and in not ſparing the body. *Col.* 2. 21, 22, 23.

Satan having caught any in this Net, bringeth them hereby to a neglect of comparing Scripture with Scripture. They often read the *Word*, but they judge of it by their own Reaſon: which Reaſon, they call the Light which God hath given them. And demand of them, why they interpret Scripture thus or thus; they will anſwer, that their Reaſon telleth them ſo. And ſo by not comparing Scripture with Scripture, they remain not onely ignorant of the true meaning thereof; but they fill the world with a multitude of heretical Notions; perverting the Scriptures, when, and how they pleaſe.

Secondly, hereby *Satan* maketh them to contemn all Interpretations of Scripture, which their Reaſon will not allow of. And if the Truths of God, conteyned in the word, be declared unto them; they are ſo wedded to their own Judgements, that they have neither Patience to hear them, nor conſider them.

Thirdly, Hereby *Satan* ſeeketh to deſtroy their *Faith*; cauſing them to remain in unbeliefe of thoſe things which their Reaſon cannot approve of. For if *Faith* come by hearing, then they that ſtop their Eares againſt any thing but the dictates of their own carnal Reaſon; muſt needs remain weak in the *Faith*. And

Fourthly, Hereby he cauſeth them to put private Interpretations upon the *Scriptures*; applying them at their pleaſures to particular Times, Places, and Perſons. Whereas the Scriptures and divine propheſies, as they came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men ſpake as they were moved by the holy Ghoſt; ſo they are not to be interpreted according to the *will* of man, with any private Interpretation; but according to the mind and ſpirit of God; which we can only find out by ſearching the Scriptures, and comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.

A Third way by which Satan bringeth many to a miſ-

underſtanding of the Scriptures, and a perverſion thereof; is, by keeping them in Ignorance of the preſent Diſpenſation they are under; hereby cauſing them in Goſpel-Times, to walke chiefly by the Rule of the Law; and to look for the performance and accompliſhment of thoſe things in their Daies, which are not to be fulfilled until future Times.

This *Satan* doth, by making uſe of Ignorant and unfaithful ſhepherds: who knowing not the Scriptures themſelvs, or unfaithfully diſpencing them, ſomtimes contrary to the Convictions of their own hearts, Light, and knowledge (to maintain their temporal Advantages, and to keep up the principles of their artificial and ſcholaſtic Theology) do impoſe ſuch Doctrines upon the world, that they lay the weight of a mans Juſtification upon his duties and performances: thereby deſtroying (as far as in them lyeth) the *Faith* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And although in their Doctrines and words they will ſpeak of Juſtification by *Faith*; yet in their works and practizes they deny it. Laying heavy burdens (works and duties) upon men, which neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear. And hereby Satan cauſeth them, either to omit, or pervert, and wreſt thoſe Scriptures which hold forth Juſtification freely by *Faith*, in Chriſt, without the works of the Law.

Secondly *Satan* doth, by his Seducements and ſubtile Suggeſtions, cauſe many to miſtake diverſe prophetical Scriptures, as to *Time*: by perſwading them, that the accompliſhment of thoſe Promiſes will be in their *Daies*. And this he doth, by taking Advantage of an earneſt deſire, which is in many profeſſors, to ſee the fulfilling of thoſe things which are conteined in thoſe Propheſies: becauſe they are perſwaded that, thereby, the Lord would be exceedingly glorified. And therefore the Saints in theſe Times ſhould very carefully watch over their Zeale; which in moſt men is rather a paſſion, then a Grace: eſpecially if it be fixed upon a wrong Object. The Jewes were Zealous of the Law of *Moſes*; but being ignorant of the Law of the Goſpel of Chriſt, their zeale was diſallowed

ed of by the Apoſtle: ſaying, they have a zeale but not according to knowledge, for they being ignorant of the Righteouſneſſe of God, went about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſſe. And ſo far did this zeale hurry them, that they perſecuted the moſt precious Saints of Jeſus Chriſt. Thus *Paul* perſecuted the Church. *Phil.* 3. 6. and thus *Satan* took Advantage againſt the Diſciples, working upon their Zeale, who were then Ignorant of their preſent Diſpenſation and work which Chriſt was then to do in the world. For when Jeſus Chriſt was to go to Jeruſalem, (on a certain time) he ſent ſome before him, who prepared his lodging in a Town of the *Samaritans*. The *Samaritans* (being profeſſed Enemies to the Jewes) finding that Chriſt intended to go to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, refuſed to receive him. Whereupon, *James* and *John* (moved with Zeale, taking for example *Elias* the prophet, but being at that Time ignorant of the work which their Maſter then came to do) moved the Lord to command fire to come down from heaven to conſume the *Samaritans*. But the Lord anſwered, *Ye know not of what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them.* And aſſuredly *Satan* doth work thus in the world, taking advantage of a great zeale which is in many Saints; who are zealous of the glory of God, and tender of his honour: who ſet before them the Examples of many Zealous Saints, who were acted by an immediate hand of God: and they call for *fire*, *Judgements*, *blaſtings*, and *wrath* upon many, whom they ſee do diſhonour God; and as they conceive do carry on the work of *Satan*, againſt Chriſt. Not conſidering, that yet we are under the tenders of the Goſpel; and a door of mercy is open unto all men. To all ſorts of ſinners: (excepting thoſe who ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt) to whoremongers, and Idolaters, to drunkards, and blaſphemers; ſo that he that is a perſecuter of Chriſt and his Saints to day, may be a converted *Paul* to morrow: Not conſidering, that the day of wrath, vengeance, and utter deſtruction is the *Day* of the *Lord*: the Day of his next coming, and appearing. Untill which time, his Diſciples

Rom. 10. 2.

Luk. 9. 51, to 56.

ſhould be merciful; as their father which is in heaven is merciful: who maketh his Sun to ariſe on the evil and
Mat. 5. 44, 45, 46. good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt and unjuſt. Wherefore, the Saints in theſe *Daies* ſhould watch over their zeale; and have a Care that it be bounded with love on the one hand, and knowledge on the other: and be circumſpect that they fix their zeale on a right Object; according to that of the Apoſtle, *It is good to be zealous* (or
Gal. 4. 15, 16, 17. 18. earneſt) *in a good thing*. We ſhould zealouſly love, when the Lord would have us do good; but we ſhould not hate zealouſly, when the Lord would have us to love: nor Curſe, when he would have us to bleſſe: nor deprecate any, when he would have us to pray for all Men.

Satan having caught any in this *Snare*, that is, blinded their Eyes, that they are not able to know the things that belong to their preſent *Diſpenſation*: and having wrought upon their zeale, and fixed it upon a wrong Object; In the firſt place, he doth deprive the Saints (who are thus deceived by him) of many goſpel Comforts, which do ariſe from the apprehenſion of the Love of God, grounded upon free Grace; and applied unto us by, and in Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, hereby, that is, by altering the nature and property of true zeale, (which is alwaies attended with love, knowledge, and humility) he increaſeth ſpiritual Pride in them; which may be thus diſcerned, when they begin to have low thoughts of all men but of themſelves; and of ſuch as agree with their Judgements: when they ſeperate themſelves from their *Brethren*; ſuppoſing them to be Low, flat, dead, backward, and leſſe zealous in the worke of God then themſelves: when they will paſſe a Judgement upon others; and ſay this man is guilty of the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt, this man is faln from the *Faith*, and his former profeſſions; this man is an hypocrite, this man is a Perſecuter of the Saints, this man is not to be pray'd for, this man ought to be cut off: again, by reaſon of this Spiritual Pride, they bitterly curſe and ſpeak againſt thoſe whom they looke upon to be the Enemies of Chriſt; and ſuch as oppoſe, and (as they conceive) perſecute

perſecute them. Neither can they, by reaſon hereof, hear any brotherly admonition, although never ſo lovingly and friendly urged; but they fly out into Impatiency, Indignation, Cenſuring, uncivil geſtures, and, perhaps, bitter Expreſſions againſt thoſe who cannot Cloſe with their Judgement, or do oppoſe it.

A fourth way by which *Satan* doth deceive in theſe Times, cauſing many to pervert and miſunderſtand the Scripture; is by tempting them, and drawing them to put allegorical and myſtical (as they call them) Interpretations upon prophetical, and Doctrinal Scriptures.

This work *Satan* effecteth, by taking Advantage of the Excellency of humane learning in many men. By which they do not onely ſcorne to deliver themſelves, in their diſcourſing, preaching, praying, or writing, according to Scripture Language: but they will finde out quaint Expreſſions, high Rapturs, and Notions admired by many; which muſt be called the Dictates of the holy Ghoſt; and an excellent Spirit of Utterance; which doth prove in a little Time, (as this Age hath experienced) to be onely carnal and artificiall. But they will not content themſelves with the abuſe of Scripture by unwarrantable words; but the whole Scripture, and every part thereof muſt be looked upon as an *Allegorie*: and ſo they will make of it what they pleaſe. Hereupon much Confuſion hath ariſen; by reaſon of many vain diſputations, and the divulging of phantaſtical Notions. Every one of theſe men making what they pleaſe of *God*, *Angels*, *Reſurrection*, *heaven*, *the word*, *divine union*, *Anoynting*, *Law and Goſpel*, And hereupon, the late *King Charles* was made God the father: the then *Parliament*, *God* the Son: and the Lawes, the *Holy Spirit*: in a Book intituled the *Leaves* of the Tree of Life. With many other horrid Blaſphemies.

We ſhould take notice of thoſe Scriptures which the holy Ghoſt doth take allegorically; but we ought not to allegorize any Scripture, which the holy Ghoſt would have us to vnderſtand literally.

Again, *Satan* cauſeth men to miſunderſtand the Scriptures,

tures, by putting a Mist before their Eyes; so that they cannot see afar off. And this he doth effect, by causing them to look no further then their present Dispensation. For although they may there discern the Truth: yet, if they look no further; they shall never see all the Truth. They look upon all things in Scripture with a *Spiritual* Eye; but see not that those things, or many of them (which are prophetical) shall be really accomplished. And hereupon some see no Resurrection, but the rising to newnesse of Life: no *Coming* of Christ, but by his Spirit: no Reign nor Kingdome of Christ, but by his *Spirit* in the heart of his Saints: No *Canaan*, but the *Kingdome* of heaven.

Satan by bringing many into this *Snare*, (although he cannot destroy their Soules) yet while they lye under this Cloud; he doth trouble them with vain *Disputations*, and contentious Arguings, in defence of their present thoughts, and Apprehensions of the Scriptures, and keepeth them in darknesse, and ignorance, of many excellent, and comfortable Truths. But

Lastly *Satan* doth draw many to misunderstand, & pervert the Scriptrs, by holding forth the mind of God in unwarrantable Expressions, and words which Mans Wisdome teacheth. Therefore the Apostle said, If any consent not to the wholsom words of our Lord Jesus Christ,
1 Tim.6.3,4,5. and to the Doctrine which is according to *Godlinesse*; he is puffed up, and knoweth nothing, but doteth about Questions and strife of words: whereof cometh Envy, strife, railing, evil surmising, and vain Disputation of men of corrupt minde, and destitute of the Truth. And assuredly there is much in that Exhortation of the Apostle unto *Timothy, keep the true Pattern of the wholsome words*
2 Tim.1.13. *which thou hast heard of me in Faith and Love.* For

When *Satan* hath brought any into this *Snare*; when men will not read the *Scriptures* that they may be able to understand the language of the holy *Ghost*: then, he (*Satan*) sendeth them to buy their knowledge at the shop of humane learning; and teacheth them this Principle, that is, *That humanity is a helpe to Divinity: that*

Grammer

Grammer causeth men to write and speake of the things of God congruously: that Logick inableth men to finde out the Truths of Divinitie, and to reason the more able: that Philosophy directeth them to the reason and Cause of things: and that by the force of Rhetorick men may more excellently utter and expresse themselves, when they speake of Scriptural and divine Mysteries. And hereupon (they will tell you) it was that *Isaiah* (a learned man) wrote a more excellent Stile then the rest of the Prophets: and *Paul* (who was bred at the feet of *Gamaliel*) was more eloquent; and delivered himselfe in better Language, then the rest of the Apostles.

Being brought into this *Snare*, they vilifie and reproach the Scriptures; and say that they are darke, obscure, and imperfect in themselves: and therefore it is necessary that men should look upon them by the Candle of humane learning.

Hereby *Satan* taketh them off from the study of the Scriptures; and setteth them upon the Search of the *Knotty schoole-men*: the *contradictory Counsels*: nay, hereby he directeth them to *heathen Poets*: *Ethnick Philosophers*: and *fabulous Moralists*, to finde among their writings, what the mind of God should be concerning this or that Scripture.

Hereupon the world hath been filled with many larg volums of vain, and unprofitable *Disputations*, and Controversies.

Hereby many have been a long time learning, but never have come to the knowledge of the Truth.

And hereby many heresies have arisen; and the Scriptures have been wrested into as many formes, as there are Notions or varieties of opinions among men: to the delusion of some, but utter destruction, and irreparable and irrecoverable Losse of others.

And thus much shall suffice to have been written concerning the first *Snare* which *Satan* doth lay to intrap, and insnare many deluded, and onely formal professors of Christianity: and if it were possible to deceive the very Elect. For *Satan* knoweth if the foundation be taken away

way, the building muſt of neceſſity fall: if the Eye be put out, the whole body muſt be darke: and if he can deprive men of light; they muſt walke in darkneſſe, and ſtumble, and fall.

The ſecond Snare that Satan layeth for thoſe that profeſſe Chriſtianity, is by his ſeducements; to cauſe them to give heed to Dreames, and viſions.

And this *Satan* doth, by moving them to apply thoſe Scriptures, which promiſe that men ſhall Dreame *Dreams*, to their preſent Generation. When men, in theſe Times, will deſire of the Lord thoſe things, which he hath declared ſhall not come to paſſe until after Ages; it is juſt with him to give power unto *Satan*, to delude ſuch by *Dreames* and *viſions*. Theſe things are not to be expected, in and during the time of the Kingdome of *Satan*.

If the Lord denied *Satan* to appear unto his people, the *Jewes*, becauſe Evils were in the Land, ſhall we who are Gentiles, and live in the time of *Satans* Kingdome, and in myſtical Babylon, where all evil doth abound, and is committed with an high hand, look for ſuch appearances? certainly we ſhould deceive our ſelves if we do ſo. For the Lord will give unto his people, during the Reign of *Satan*, and while ſuch Iniquities are committed, *Night for a viſion, and Darkneſſe for a Divination; the Sun ſhall go down upon their Prophets, and the Day ſhall be darke over them.*

But for full Satisfaction in this thing, that is, to know the time wherein the Lord will manifeſt himſelf unto his people by *Dreames* and *Viſions*; there is one plain Scripture, upon which many others are grounded, that will direct us herein. We ſhall finde it in the Propheſie of

Joel 21. to 28. *Joel*, where the Lord ſaith, *He will do great things for his People, then the Children of Iſrael ſhall rejoyce in their God. He will give them the Raine of Righteouſneſſe; then their Barnes ſhall be full of wheat, and the Preſſes ſhall abound with wine and oyle, and they ſhall never be aſhamed. AFTERWARDS, the Lord will powre out his ſpirit upon all fleſh: and their Sons and their Daughters ſhall propheſie, and their old men ſhall DREAME DREAMES, and their young men*

men ſhall ſee VISIONS. So that we are not to looke for the powring out of the Spirit, as the Prophet hath foretold; nor Revelations, by dreames and *viſions*; until the Promiſe be fulfilled to the Jewes; and the Saints be delivered out of Babylon.

When the Lord delivered the Jews into the hands of the King of *Babel*, he told them that they ſhould be ſubject to him Seventy years: yet there were ſome who did promiſe great things unto them before that time, but the Lord ſaid *Heare not your Prophets nor your Soothſayers nor your* DREAMERS, nor your *Inchanters, nor your Sorcerers, which ſay unto you, you ſhall not ſerve the King of Babel: Let not your Prophets and Soothſayers which are among you deceive you, neither give Eare to your Dreames, which you Dreame; for they Propheſie a Lye in my Name, I have not ſent them.* So I may ſay, the people and Sheep of the Lord are now in myſtical *Babylon*, where the Lord hath appointed they ſhall remain and continue in a ſcattered Condition, until their Shepherd come and gather them: and whoſoever, they are that pretend that the Lord hath by *DREAMES* and *viſions* made known unto them, that thoſe things which he hath foreſhewn by the Scriptures ſhould not come to paſſe until the next *Coming* of Chriſt; ſhall be accompliſhed before that time: (in our Age and Generation) they are not to be beleeved. For by ſuch means *Satan* ſeduceth the world, that is, he doth reveal unto many, by *Dreames* and *viſions*, thoſe things which the Lord by his Prophets hath ſpoken ſhould come to paſſe; that they who waite for ſuch Promiſes, may the more eaſily be deceived. But, this is his Deſign: he deceiveth them in a Circumſtance of Time, Places, and Perſons; and by ſuch *Dreames* and *viſions* keepeth them from ſearching the Scripture, that thereby they may acquaint themſelves with the Lords Time.

Jer. 27 9. & 28. 8.

This worke *Satan* doth effect, by taking Advantage of a *Diſpoſition* which is in the Saints; and which is naturally in all men, viz, to give Credit and eaſie beleeſe unto any who will promiſe thoſe things which they deſire, and would have come to paſſe. And by this meanes,

Satan deceiveth both the *Dreamers*, and thoſe that give Credit unto them. This was not the practice of the Apoſtle Saint *Paul*: for he ſpake not as they who *Pleaſe* men, but *God*. Neither did he uſe flattering words.

1 Theſ. 2. 4, 5.

Another Policy of *Satan*, is to reveale, by *Dreames* and *viſions*, many things which have, and will come to paſſe. For when any can ſay, I had ſuch and ſuch a thing diſcovered unto me by a *Dreame* or a *viſion*; and I ſpake of it long before it was fulfilled, and afterwards accordingly it came to paſſe: this doth perſwade thoſe that hear of ſuch *Dreames*, that all other things which they afterwards *Dreame* of, will undoubtedly come to paſſe.

This is a way by which *Satan* hath wrought in theſe Times. I will inſtance in one *Foſter*, who was reported of, by thoſe who very well knew him, to be a great *Profeſſor*; a man of able Gifts, upon whom it pleaſed the Lord to let *Satan* looſe, and in January 1650. *Satan* aſſaulted him thus: *I am the Lord of Hoſts, the holy one of Iſrael: I am come unto thee.* Then, many *viſions* were ſhewed unto him, which, ſince, came to paſſe. As the diſſolving the Parliaments, and other things. But *Satan* deceived him as to times, and Perſons. Many times he was caſt into Rapturs and Trances; during which Time he ſang *Hallalujahs*, and *Praiſes*: prophetically repeating many things, which are written in the Scriptures, *of the coming of Chriſt and the Deſtruction of his Enemies*. The vanities of theſe, and many other his viſions, Time hath already diſcovered. Therefore we ſhould be wary how we give Credit unto ſuch Spirits; although they foreſhew ſuch things as do accordingly come to paſſe.

The wayes by which *Satan* doth effect this, that is, by which he draweth men in this Age to give heed unto *Dreams* and *viſions*; is, firſt, by taking men off from the Rule of the *Word*; perſwading them, or Rather (by his cunning Suggeſtions) tempting them to try the *Word* by the Spirit of theſe *Dreamers*, but not to try their Spirits, by the Rule of the *Word*.

Secondly, by cauſing them when they *Pray*, to pray amiſſe. For it is certain that the Saints do never ſolemnly

Job 1. 6. & 2. 1.

ſet

ſet themſelves apart to *Pray*, but *Satan* is at their *Right-hand*. He is an inviſible Enemy, and therefore, my beloved friends, take it not ill if I acquaint you with his *Deceivings*. Nay if the *Sons* of God do but aſſemble together, he will be among them. [The *Sons* of God] whether Angels or Saints: for both are the *Sons* of God. And *Satan* will be among them (you may be aſſured) not as an Idle Spectator; but as an accuſer. *Rev.* 12. 10. The time of prayer is the time of *Satans* Temptation: eſpecially when the Saints, at extraordinary times, meet to *Pray* together. We finde it was thus with *Jehoſua*; for when he ſtood before the Angel of the Lord, (moſt probably when he prayed to Chriſt for the Church, and the welfare of the Saints) *Satan* ſtood at his right hand to reſiſt him. *Zach.* 3. 1.

Thirdly, *Satan* doth ſeeke to inſnare the Saints, when he doth indeavour to perſwade them to look upon theſe *Dreamers* as infallible Guides. And thus Satan doth ſtir them up to Reaſon with themſelves; *ſome things they have dreamed which have come to paſſe: which things are declared in the word, therefore they are of God: they who Dream theſe Dreames are People that fear God: they have eminent Gifts: they could not do ſuch things if they were not acted by a further Spirit and power then their own.* From theſe and ſuch like things, many conclude that their *Dreames* and *viſions* are of the holy Ghoſt; and therefore they ought to be the Rule, and Ground of their Actions, Prayers, and Performances. But if men did minde that which the Apoſtle propheſied of, they would not be too forward to do ſo. For Saint *Paul* did foreſhew, that in the latter Time, ſome ſhould depart from the *Faith*; and give heed unto Spirits of Errours, and Doctrines of Divils. 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. for this is Truth, that whatſoever Spirit doth ſet men upon the doing of thoſe things that are contrary unto the word of God; we ſhould not be guided by it.

Satan is very buſie, even among the beſt of the Saints: and therefore they cannot be too watchful. Wherefore I ſhall indeavour to try the Spirits, that are in the world; even the Spirits of *Deluſion*; comparing them with the

commands of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God ſaith, ſearch the Scriptures. *Joh.* 5. 39. and compare Spiritual things with *Spiritual.* 1 *Cor.* 2, 13. but the Spirit of deluſion ſaith; Judge of Scripture by natural Reaſon, which is the Light that *God* hath ſet up in you. The Spirit of *God* ſaith, no Scripture is of any private Interpretation: 2. *Pet.* 1. 20. the Spirit of *Deluſion* ſaith, you may make any Interpretation of Scripture, either myſtical, prophetical, literal, or what you will. The Spirit of God ſaith, let every one eſteem others better then themſelves: *Phil.* 2. 3. the Spirit of *Deluſion* ſaith, I am more holy then ſuch an one: I am more inſtant in *Duties* then ſuch. The Spirit of God ſaith Judge nothing before the time, untill the Lord come. 1 *Cor* 4. 5. the Spirit of *Deluſion* ſaith, this man is guilty of the Sin againſt the holy Ghoſt: this man is falne from *Grace:* this man is not to be prayed for; this man is a hypocrite. The holy Ghoſt ſaith, bleſſe and Curſe not: *Rom.* 12. 14. the *Spirit* of *Deluſion* ſaith, Curſe ſuch an one for he hath perſecuted the *Saints:* The *Spirit* of *God Saith,* Let Prayers be made for all men: 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. the *Spirit* of *Deluſion* ſaith, we may Pray for thoſe who are our Enemies, but not for thoſe who are the Enemies of Chriſt.

I could try theſe *Spirits* in many other Particulars; but I will indeavour by the *Scriptures,* to try the *Spirits* of thoſe who ſay they *Dreame Dreames,* and ſee *viſions* of *God*; but are falſe *Dreamers.* 1. Such *Dreamers* ſay they doe *Dreame* in the Name of the Lord, when they propheſie the *viſion* of their owne heart. *Jer.* 23. 25, 26. 2. By their *Dreames* they cauſe the People to forget the Name of the Lord. v. 27. (they give more heed unto their *Dreames* then unto the *Word* of the Lord) 3. Theſe Prophets have ſweet Tongues, and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord, and make the People to erre by their Lyes, and their flatteries: deceiving them v. 31. 32. *Jer.* 29. 8. 4. They ſpeake vain things, and comfort in vain, *Zach.* 10. 2. and 5. Theſe falſe *Dreamers* cauſe many to deſpiſe Government, and ſpeake Evil of them that are in Authority *Jude* 8.

Having

Having thus shewed how we should try the Spirits that are in the world: I will declare how these Temptations, & cunning Practises of *Satan* may be prevented. Therfore

In the first place, the Apostle doth exhort to *Sobrietie*. *Sobrietie* doth not onely consist in the moderate use of Meat and drink, but in beleeving, Loving, and trusting in the Lord. He is a sober Christian that continueth stedfast in the *Faith*: that abideth in the commandements, and trusteth in the Lord. 1 *Thess.* 5 6, 7, 8. He is a *Sober* Christian that is indued with wisdom, and Gravitie. *Tit.* 1. 8. not given to wantones, and *Levity*, *He* is a *Sober* Christion that wil not give confidence to the *Dreams* and delusions of men; but doth trust on the Grace that is brought unto him, by the Revelation of Jesus Christ: 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. that walketh by the *Rule* of the *Word*, which was written by the Inspiration of the holy Ghost, and Revelation of Jesus Christ. He is a *Sober* Christian who is not careless or negligent; but vigilant, and instant in Prayer. 1 *Pet.* 4 8. He is a *Sober* Christian that arrogateth not unto himself those *Gifts* which he hath not: nor boasteth of those *Gifts* which he hath. *Rom.* 12. 3. He is a *Sober Christian* who liveth Righteously as towards men; and godly as towards the Lord, in this present world. *Tit.* 2. 12. So that this exhortation of the Apostle is very necessary; for that in it is conteyned those *Duties*, which hold forth stability, and Constancy in our Resolutions. Because that *Satan* taketh great advantage against those who are unstable minded 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. not endued with *Sobrietie*.

Secondly, the Apostle doth exhort to vigilancy, or *Watchfulnesse*. To watch over our hearts: over others: over the drawings out of our affections: over our Zeale: over our Principles: over the world. and over *Satan*. To watch because the *Coming* of Christ is uncertain. *Mat.* 24. 42, 43, 44. To watch, least *Satan* take Advantage of Rev. 3. 3. our weaknesse in the *Faith*. 1 *Cor.* 16. 13. To watch over our Prayers continually, *Col.* 4. 2. To watch in all things. 2 Tim. 4. 5. And if a Christian ought to watch in all things; even in the *Least* things, much more over the malice Rage and Subtilty of *Satan*.]

Thirdly,

Thirdly, (that the Saints may avoid the Designes of *Satan*) the Apostle exhorteth to prayer. Prayer and watchfulnesse must alwayes go together: Watch and Pray, *Mar.*13.33. Be ye *Sober* watching in Prayer, 1 *Pet.* 4.7. *Sober* and *Stedfast* in our resolutions: watchful over every enemy: and earnest in Prayer to call for divine assistance.

If *Satan* doth tempt the Saints when they pray, and God doth require that they pray according to his minde, and will; then it is their duty to try and weigh every Petition which they put up, by the *Word*: and not to desire any thing of the Lord but what the word doth allow of: for the word is the Revelation of the minde and will of God. The holy Ghost doth help the Saints to call for those things onely which are agreeable to the minde and will of God; that is, to his *Word*. And if their hearts be drawn out to other things, they are not to give heed unto the motions of their hearts. Also in their Prayers, the Saints should have respect not only to those things which God hath promised; but to the Times, Places, and Persons to which they relate. Otherwise the Lord may draw out their hearts as to the thing promised: but *Satan* may tempt them to pray amisse as to circumstances.

A Fourth remedy to prevent the designes of *Satan*, is to hold fast to the Faith: resist *Satan* stedfast in the *Faith*, 1 *Pet.*5.9. saith the Apostle *Peter*. So likewise *St. Paul* exhorteth, *Above all take the shield of Faith, wherewith yee may quench the fiery Darts of the wicked*, *Eph.*6.16. He that is *Sober* will not easily be tempted. He that is *Vigilant* will not easily be surprized with the subtilties of *Satan*: he who hath the spirit of Prayer, will mightily prevaile against *Satan*: and by Faith the Saints are guarded against every assault of *Satan*.

Besides these two great Snares there are six erroneous opinions, which *Satan* hath drawn many Saints to take up upon the mistake of divers Texts of Scripture.

The first is, they do hold that it is the duty of the Saints to call for Judgements, and divine vengeance upon their Enemies, as being the enemies of God. So they say *Elias* did

did. 2 *Kin.* 2. 24. whereas we have an expreſſe Rule to the contrary, *Bleſs I ſay, and curſe not.* Ro. 12. 14. for which they alledge that which is written in the Revelation, where the *Soules* which lay under the Alter cried, *How long Lord, holy and true doſt thou Judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* which words, by the very poynting of them, do appear to be ſpoken by way of Interrogation, rather then by way of *Deprecation.* For, hereby, the Saints do rather deſire to know how long it would be before the Lord would Avenge them of their Enemies, then call for vengeance upon them. Another Text they produce, to prove that the Saints may cal for judgments on the heads of wicked men, is, becauſe it is ſaid *Rev.* 11 6. the witneſſes of Jeſus have Power to ſhut heaven, to turn water into blood, and to ſmite the Earth with plagues as often as they will; which I ſuppoſe they did not by curſing and bitterneſſe; but by patient bearing of afflictions; and forgiving (heartily) their Enemies. Hereby they put *vengeance* into the hand of God, and heaped c bales of fire upon their Enemies. *Prov.* 25. 21, 22.

Secondly, many do now hold, that in the Apoſtles *Daies* the Saints were to looke upon the Magiſtrate as the Ordinance of God; but in theſe Times they are not ſo to eſteeme of him. And the Reaſon they ſay is, becauſe then, he received his Power from God; but now the *Beaſt*, the great *Monarchy*, receiveth *Power* from the *Dragon.* which is a *Deluſion* (in the main) for in the Apoſtles *Daies*, the Romane Monarchy, as governed by heathen Emperours, (being the *Beaſt* that came out of th: *Sea.*) received, then, power from the *Dragon: Rev.* 13. 2. as well as the Romane Monarchy, governed by Popes, (which was the *Beaſt* that came out of the Earth *Rev.* 13, 11.) who did exerciſe all the Power of the firſt *Beaſt.* v. 12. 14. This is quite contrary to the rule of the *Goſpel*; which commandeth the *Saints* to yeild obedience to Magiſtrates, to Principalities, and *Powers. Tit.* 3. 1, *Rom.* 13. 1. 1 *Pet.* 2, 13, 14. And if the Iſraelites, (while they remained in heatheniſh Babylon) were commanded to ſeeke the proſperity of the City (wherein they lived) and to pray unto the

the Lord for it: becauſe in the Peace thereof they were to have Peace. *Jer.* 29 6, 7. I ſuppoſe it is the duety of every Chriſtian (in what place ſoever of myſtical Babylon he live in, until the time come in which the Lord hath appointed to deliver his people thence) to Pray Earneſtly for thoſe who are in Authority, and for the peace of the Nation wherein they live. For, to ſtirre up thoſe who profeſs Religion againſt the higher Powers is a ſlieght of *Satan* to move them to Inſurrection, and Rebellion: (as he did in *Germany* by many lying viſions) to their ſhame and Reproach, and ſcandal to Religion. The main End that *Satan* aimeth at, in ſeducing thoſe who profeſſe Godlineſſe, to revile and rebel againſt the Civil Power; is, thereby to deprive them of their Liberty of aſſembling, and meeting together. (An unvalued mercy for hereby (by their reproaching the Magiſtrate) the Magiſtrate (being provoked) doth move Perſecution; for which, many times, both he and the whole Nation is plagued: and many real and guiltles Saints do ſuffer for the offences of ſome deluded Profeſſors. Hereby the Name of God and Religion is diſhonoured: and the Propagation of the Goſpel hindred, by thoſe, who thinke themſelves the onely Perſons who carry on the worke of God, more then any other in their Generation.

Thirdly, this Errour is frequent among thoſe who profeſſe Religion, they ſay, they ought to Pray for their own Enemes, but not for the Enemies of Chriſt. As if any were an Enemy to the Saints, and not an Enemy to Chriſt. What Injury is don to them, is don to Chriſt. He that perſecuteth them perſecuteth the Lord Jeſus. *Acts* 9. 4. & 22. 7. & 26. 14, & 22. 8. & 26. 15. ſo that if the Saints were not to Pray for the Enemies of Chriſt, they could not pray for their own Enemes. If the one were forbidden, the other (precept) could not be kept. Beſides, Chriſt prayed for his Enemies. *Luke* 23. 34. and *Stephen* prayed for the Perſecutors of the Saints. *Act.* 7. 60. and our *Saviour* declared that all *Sins* and *Blaſphemies* (except againſt the holy *Ghoſt*) ſhould be forgiven unto men. *Mar.* 3. 28, 29. then if all *Sins* wherewith men

ſin

ſin againſt Chriſt be remiſſible, or pardonable: they may be prayed for. 1 *Joh.* 5. 16, 17. The Rule then, is not onely to pray for men as they are Enemies unto us, but as they are Enemies to Chriſt.

And indeed herby *Satan* doth ſeeke to deſtroy a Saint, and fruſtrate all Graces in him. If a man ſhould looſe a Leg, or an Arme, or any other Limbe, he might notwithſtanding live many yeares: but if a mans Heart were wounded, he would ſuddenly dye, although all the reſt of his body were ſafe: So if *Satan* can worke any to forſake Charity; he knoweth then, that the reſt of their Graces (if they had all other) would not Advantage them. 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2, 3. for Love is the very being of a Saint: and the true Image of God. So that under colour of hating of the Enemies of God, *Satan* ſeeketh in theſe laſt Times, to deface the Image of Chriſt in the Saints.

To make this paſſe the more current, he doth minde them of that which *David* ſaith, *I hate thoſe that hate thee. Pſal.* 139. 21, 22, 23, 24. where firſt, this was ſpoken prophetically of Chriſt, who knew all thoſe who were Enemies unto God, appointed unto deſtruction; and therefore he could diſtinguiſh the irreconcileable Enemies of God from his Saints: ſo that he knew whom to pray for, and whom to hate, but the Saints cannot do this, therefore they muſt follow the Rule; and Pray for all men. If they be worthy, their Prayers and wiſhes remain with them: if not, they return to them again, *Luk.* 10. 5, 6. and ſecondly, in the time of the Law, they knew who were the Enemies of God, and who were not: they knew that onely the *Seed* of *Abraham* were freinds, and in Covenant with God, and that all the reſt of the world were his Enemies, whom they were to hate. Therefore it was that the Prophet ſaid to *Jehoſophat*, *wouldſt thou love them that hate the Lord? therefore the wrath of the Lord is upon the*, 2 *Chr.* 19: 2. But when Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered, then the partition wall was taken away; and ſince that time, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Circumciſion nor uncircumſion, but a new Creature. Now the Goſpel is tendered to all; and

ſo farre as the mercy of God doth extend; (which is to all) ſo farre our mercy ſhould reach, *Luke* 6. 35,36.

Fourthly, *Satan* would perſwade the Saints that they are the litle Stone ſpoken of in *Daniel*; which muſt break the great Image. And becauſe the Kingdome of Chriſt muſt be ſet up in the dayes of thoſe Kings ſpoken of in *Daniel*; therefore *Satan* would perſwade them that before the comming of Chriſt they muſt oppoſe the Kingdomes of the world and powers thereof: and ſo endeavours to ſtirr them up to inſurrection and rebellion: contrary to that in *Daniel*; *The Horne ſhall make Battel againſt the Saints, and prevail, until the ancient of dayes come, and the time approached that the Saints poſſeſſed the Kingdome*, *Dan.*7.21,22. So that until Chriſt come the Horne muſt prevaile, and the Saints muſt not have a Kingdome, and until Chriſt come to ſet up his Kingdome: the litle Stone or Kingdome muſt not break the Image in pieces.

Fifthly, *Satan* telleth them that they muſt beare teſtimony againſt all *ungodlineſs*, and that is truth: but he would hereby ſtirre them up to beare their teſtimony in ſuch a way, that they may juſtly be eſteemed to be *railers*, *revilers*, *Incendiaries* to rebellion, diſſwaders of divers from their obedience to the Magiſtrate. Whereas *Michael*, when he ſtrove againſt the Divel, and diſputed about the body of *Moſes*, durſt not blame him with curſed ſpeaking: and hereby he ſtirreth them up to all bitterneſſe, and uncharitableneſſe, and to look upon none as brethren, but thoſe who are of their own Judgements and opinion in all or moſt things; and they whom they look upon otherwiſe, they ſuppoſe are the enemies of Chriſt, and therefore they ought not to pray for them.

Laſtly, *Satan* in theſe laſt times ſtirreth up the Saints to Judge of one another by their outward actings, whether they be natural failings, or ſuch things as they do amiſſe by reaſon of the ſubtile, frequent, and powerful temptations of Satan. And to this purpoſe there is a Text very much abuſed, which is, *By their fruits you ſhall know*

*know them, Math.*7. 20. And indeed by the actions we may ſee what, for the preſent, is in the poor, ſinful, and corrupt heart: yet hereby we cannot Judge of any ones intereſt in Chriſt: notwithſtanding, from this *Scripture* *Satan* doth tempt and provoke many very hardly and unchriſtianly to cenſure others: nay not only to paſſe a Judgement on their actions; (wherein there may be a miſtake by reaſon of miſrepreſentation, miſapprehenſion, miſunderſtanding, miſinformation, and the like) but of their intents and purpoſes: (when none is able to judge of the ſincerity of the heart but only the Lord) nay of their ſpiritual condition (when no man can tell whoſe name is written in the Book of life, and whoſe not: it being a ſecret which God hath reſerved unto himſelfe) and to ſtrengthen them in this unchriſtian practice, *Satan* moveth them to Judge of others by the *Letter* of the *Law*: and then they ſay they have a warrant for what they do. As ſometimes they Judge a man to be a backſlider, from his former profeſſions: (and who can ſay he is not a backſlider) and then they cenſure him a Caſtaway, alledging that in *Luke*, *He that putteth his hand to the Plough and looketh back is not fit for the Kingdome of God, Luke* 9.62. And ſometimes they Judge a man of hypocriſie, and then they look upon him as utterly loſt, alledging that in *Job*, *The Hypocrites hope ſhall periſh, Job* 8.13. Not conſidering that by the workes of the Law no fleſh ſhall be juſtified, and if the Lord ſhould Judge them that thus Judge others, by the letter of the Law, their condition would be very ſad. Not conſidering that they whom they Judge may belong unto Chriſt; (for ought they know) not conſidering that Chriſt is tender of the temptations of his Saints, and that he might be ſo, he was in all things tempted in like ſort: not conſidering that although the unjuſt (of whom *Peter* ſpeaketh 2 *Pet.*2.9,10. ſhall be reſerved unto the day of Judgement, yet the godly ſhall be delivered out of temptation. Therefore Brethren we ſhould not Judge one another by the letter of the Law, but by the rule of the

Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, which biddeth us to Judg no man neither our Brethren nor thoſe who are without. For we are not under the Law but under grace.

Thus *Satan* by theſe fallacies and deluſions and ſuch like doth breake in ſadly among the Saints, and thoſe who profeſſe Religion in theſe laſt Times.

And now having diſcovered many Subtilties of *Satan*, and the way by which they may be perceived and by mercy prevented; I will lay down ſome particulars, as a Rule for the Saints to walk by, in the Laſt Times; which indeed is their Generation worke.

They muſt continue in the things which are conteined in the Scriptures. 2 *Tim.* 3. 14, to 17. they muſt be diligent, and peaceable, without ſpot, and blameleſſe, and grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3, 14, 18. they ſhould edifie themſelves in their moſt holy *Faith*, they ſhould pray in the holy Ghoſt, they ſhould keep themſelves in the Love of God, looking for the mercies of Jeſus Chriſt; *and have compaſſion of ſome in putting difference Jude* 18. to 22. watching, and preparing themſeves for the Coming of Jeſus Chriſt. *Math.* 25. 1, to 14, They muſt love their Enemies, bleſſe them that Curſe them, and do good to them that hate them: praying for them that deſpitefully uſe them, and perſecute them, *Math.* 5. 43, to 48. They ſhould bleſſe and Curſe not. Being defrauded they ſhould intreate. 1 *Cor.* 4. 12, 13. They ſhould not revile the Gods, nor Curſe the Rulers of the People. *Exod.* 22. 28. They ſhould ſhew out a good Converſation, by their works, with meekneſſe and wiſdom. *Jam.* 3. 8, to 18. They ſhould not ſpeake evil of their brethren, nor Judge them. *Jam.* 4. 11, 12. *Rom.* 14. 4, 10, 13. *Math.* 7. 1, 2. *Joh.* 8. 15, & 12, 47. They ſhould Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord *Come*. 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. and as they ought not to Judge their brethren, ſo they ſhould not Judge thoſe that are without. 1 *Cor.* 4. 12, 13. They ſhould forgive their Enemies. *Math.* 6. 14, 15. They ſhould not be toſſed, and carried too and fro, with

with Every winde of Doctrine; but ſpeake the Truth in Love. *Eph.* 4. 14, 15. They ſhould pray for all men, for Kings and all that are in Authority, according to the Rule of the Apoſtle. 1 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2, 3.

If any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholſom words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſſe; he is proud knowing nothing. 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 4. whoſoever abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath not *God*; and if any come and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not, neither bid him *God* ſpeed. 2. *Joh.* 10. 11. for there are ſome that pervert the *Goſpel* of Chriſt; but if any (though an Angel from heaven) Preach any other Goſpel, then what Chriſt and the Apoſtles have preached, let him be accurſed. *Gal.* 3. 7, 8.

Neither, beloved friends, be ye too credulous of all thoſe things which you heare ſpoken by the moſt precious Saints, untill you try them by the Scriptures. For *Satan* hath not onely Power to enter into the Saints before their converſion, *Mar.* 16. 9. but hath great power to tempt them, after the *Lord* hath called them. *Math.* 16. 23. and over thoſe who are only ſeeming Profeſſors, (although they may be indued with many excellent gifts of the *Spirit*) he hath *Power* even to tempt them, to their utter Deſtruction. *Act.* 5. 3.

Yet here is the Comfort of the Elect, that there is a time appointed in which *Satan* ſhall be troden underfeet. *Rom.* 16. 20. and until then, (notwithſtanding *Satan* doth endeavour to winnow them like wheate) they ſhall be preſerved by the Interceſſion of the *Lord* Jeſus. *Luk.* 22. 31, 32.

It is a difficult thing to know the depths of *Satan*. *Rev.* 2. 24. for he taketh Advantage not onely againſt the ſins of the Saints, but of their beſt Gifts. As of their zeale, knowledge, deſires after God, and of their very Prayers: but eſpecially of their coldneſſe of Love, and want of Charity. 2 *Cor.* 2. 1, to 12. Therefore, Brethren, often conſider

ſider, and endeavour to the utmoſt to practiſe the Apoſtles Rule, and Exhortation; *Be ſober, and watch, for your Adverſary the Divil, as a roaring Lyon, goeth about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

FINIS.